

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings of claims in the application:

1. (Currently Amended) A toner composition, comprising:

toner particles comprising:

a binder resin comprising:

a an urea-modified polyester resin; and

a second resin having a weight average molecular weight of from
2,000 to 10,000,

a colorant;

a release agent; and

a particulate material which is present in at least a surface portion of the toner particles while embedded into the surface portion,

wherein the toner particles are prepared by a method comprising

dissolving or dispersing a composition, which comprises at least a ~~modified~~ polyester prepolymer resin (A) capable of reacting with an active hydrogen and the second resin, the colorant, the release agent and a compound having an active hydrogen, in an organic solvent to prepare an oil phase liquid;

dispersing the oil phase liquid in an aqueous medium comprising said particulate material while subjecting the ~~modified~~ polyester prepolymer resin (A) to a polymerization reaction to prepare the urea-modified polyester resin and to prepare a dispersion;

removing the organic solvent ~~of~~ from the dispersion to prepare the toner particles; washing the toner particles; and drying the toner particles,

wherein the binder resin has a glass transition temperature not lower than 35°C and lower than 55°C, and wherein the particulate material has an average particle diameter of from 0.002 to 0.2 times that of the toner particles;

wherein the particulate material comprises a particulate resin having a glass transition temperature of from 55 to 100°C;

wherein the particulate resin is crosslinked using a crosslinking agent;

wherein the binder resin comprises tetrahydrofuran-insoluble components in an amount of from 2 to 30 % by weight.

2. (Canceled)

3. (Canceled)

4-7. (Canceled)

8. (Currently Amended) The toner composition according to Claim 1, wherein the second resin is an unmodified polyester resin, and wherein a ratio ~~(i/ii)~~ of the urea-modified polyester resin ~~(i)~~ to the unmodified polyester resin ~~(ii)~~ is from 5/95 to 60/40.

9. (Canceled)

10. (Previously Presented) The toner composition according to Claim 1, wherein the particulate resin comprises a resin selected from the group consisting of vinyl resins, polyurethane resins, epoxy resins and polyester resins.

11. (Canceled)

12. (Canceled)

13. (Original) The toner composition according to Claim 1, wherein the toner particles have a spindle form.

14. (Original) The toner composition according to Claim 13, wherein a ratio ($r2/r1$) of a minor axis particle diameter ($r2$) of the toner particles to a major axis particle diameter ($r1$) of the toner particles is from 0.5 to 0.8, and a ratio ($r3/r2$) of a thickness ($r3$) of the toner particles to the minor axis particle diameter ($r2$) is from 0.7 to 1.0.

15-20. (Canceled)

21. (Currently Amended) A toner composition, comprising:

toner particles comprising:

a binder resin comprising:

a an urea-modified polyester resin; and

a second resin having a weight average molecular weight of from 2,000 to 10,000,

a colorant;

a release agent; and

a particulate material which is present in at least a surface portion of the toner particles while embedded into the surface portion,

wherein the toner particles are prepared by a method comprising dissolving or dispersing a composition, which comprises at least a ~~modified~~ polyester prepolymer resin (A) capable of reacting with an active hydrogen and the second resin, the colorant, the release agent and a compound having an active hydrogen, in an organic solvent to prepare an oil phase liquid; dispersing the oil phase liquid in an aqueous medium comprising said particulate material while subjecting the ~~modified~~ polyester prepolymer resin (A) to a polymerization reaction to prepare the urea-modified polyester resin and to prepare a dispersion; removing the organic solvent ~~of~~ from the dispersion to prepare the toner particles; washing the toner particles; and drying the toner particles,

wherein the binder resin has a glass transition temperature not lower than 35°C and lower than 55°C, and wherein the particulate material has an average particle diameter of from 0.002 to 0.2 times that of the toner particles;

wherein the particulate material comprises a particulate resin having a glass transition temperature of from 55 to 100°C;

wherein the particulate resin is crosslinked using a crosslinking agent;

wherein the binder resin comprises tetrahydrofuran-insoluble components in an amount of from 1 to 30 % by weight based on total weight of the binder resin.

22. (Original) The toner composition according to Claim 1, wherein the release agent is a wax.

23. (Original) The toner composition according to Claim 1, further comprising an external additive which is present at least on a surface of the toner particles.

24. (Currently Amended) A toner composition, comprising:

toner particles comprising:

a binder resin comprising:

[[a]] an urea-modified polyester resin; and

a second resin having a weight average molecular weight of from 2,000 to 10,000,

a colorant;

a release agent; and

a particulate material which is present at least a surface portion of the toner particles while embedded into the surface portion,

wherein the toner particles are prepared by a method comprising

dissolving or dispersing a composition in an organic solvent, to obtain a solution or dispersion, said composition comprising

at least a ~~modified~~ polyester prepolymer resin (A) capable of reacting with an active hydrogen, and

the second resin,

the colorant, and

the release agent,

and to prepare the toner particles and to be subjected to a polymerization reaction in an aqueous medium, and obtaining the solvent from the solution or dispersion by removing said solvent, cleaning the toner particles and drying the toner particles,

wherein the binder resin has a glass transition temperature not lower than 35°C and lower than 55°C, and wherein the particulate material has an average particle diameter of from 0.002 to 0.2 times that of the toner particles;

wherein the particulate material comprises a particulate resin having a glass transition temperature of from 55 to 100°C;

wherein the particulate resin is crosslinked using a crosslinking agent;

wherein the binder resin comprises tetrahydrofuran-insoluble components in an amount of from 2 to 30 % by weight.

25. (Canceled)

26. (Currently Amended) A method for manufacturing a toner composition comprising toner particles, comprising:

dissolving or dispersing a composition, which comprises at least a ~~modified polyester prepolymer resin~~ (A) capable of reacting with an active hydrogen, a second resin having a weight average molecular weight of from 2,000 to 10,000, a colorant, a release agent and a compound having an active hydrogen, in an organic solvent to prepare an oil phase liquid;

dispersing the oil phase liquid in an aqueous medium including a particulate material while subjecting the ~~modified polyester prepolymer resin~~ (A) to a polymerization reaction to prepare ~~[[a]]~~ an urea- modified polyester resin and to prepare a dispersion;

removing at least the organic solvent ~~[[in]]~~ from the dispersion to prepare the toner particles;

washing the toner particles; and

drying the toner particles thereby obtaining the toner composition comprising

said toner particles comprising:

a binder resin comprising:

the urea-modified polyester resin; and

the second resin having a weight average molecular weight of from 2,000 to 10,000,

the colorant;

the release agent; and

the particulate material which is present at least a surface portion of the toner particles while embedded into the surface portion,

wherein the binder resin has a glass transition temperature not lower than 35°C and lower than 55°C, and wherein the particulate material has an average particle diameter of from 0.002 to 0.2 times that of the toner particles;

wherein the particulate material comprises a particulate resin having a glass transition temperature of from 55 to 100°C;

wherein the particulate resin is crosslinked using a crosslinking agent;

wherein the binder resin comprises tetrahydrofuran-insoluble components in an amount of from 2 to 30 % by weight.

27. (Previously Presented) A developer comprising:

a toner composition according to Claim 1; and

a carrier comprising a layer on a surface thereof,

wherein the layer comprises at least one member selected from the group consisting of an acrylic resin, a silicone resin and mixtures thereof.

28. (Previously Presented) A method for fixing a toner image, comprising:

passing an image bearing material bearing a toner image thereon through a nip between a fixing belt and a pressure member while applying heat to the toner image to fix the toner image on the image bearing material, wherein the fixing belt has a U form at the nip,

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wherein a toner that forms said toner image on the image bearing material is the toner according to Claim 1.